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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [IZ](#)  
SUBJECT: DHI QAR PRT AND U.S. ARMY CIVIL AFFAIRS PERSONNEL  
MEET WITH JAM OFFICIAL

Classified By: Acting Dhi Qar PRT Team Leader for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (U) This is a PRT Dhi Qar cable.

12. (S) Summary: Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) and U.S. Army 1/34 Civil Affairs personnel met with a representative of the Jaysh Al Mahdi Militia (JAM) on October 26 to discuss access to parts of the province under the influence of the JAM. The interlocutors spoke for about 90 minutes and covered a wide range of topics including extent of JAM control of Dhi Qar Province, JAM control over fringe elements associated with JAM, and intent of JAM to resist or cooperate with Coalition Forces (CFs) in reconstruction of Iraq. There is some sentiment among the JAM in Dhi Qar to cooperate with the CFs in reconstruction, but JAM members have thus far resisted out of fear of reprisals from radical fringe members over whom the JAM leaders have little or no control. End summary.

13. (S) Dhi Qar PRT Provincial Program Manager and U.S. Army 1/34 Civil Affairs personnel met with a representative of the JAM on October 26 to discuss access to sites and the possibility of developing reconstruction projects in areas under JAM influence. The meeting followed a breakfast meetings with local Sheiks on October 24 in which PRT and Civil Affairs personnel had private and separate conversations with two Sheiks of the Gizzie tribe in Dhi Qar province. The Sheiks asked why the United States was only focusing its reconstruction efforts in Dhi Qar in the Al-Baatha area, and with the Gizzie tribe. They indicated that other tribes and Sheiks were becoming envious of the Gizzie tribe. (Comment: it is possible given the context that they feared some sort of reprisals against them for receiving too much benefit from CFs.) PRT and Civil Affairs personnel indicated that at this time it is difficult for CFs to effect reconstruction projects in many parts of the province due to lack of security, and then asked the Sheiks if they had any connections with the JAM. (Comment: It is understood and accepted that the local Sheiks will have such connections.) Two days later they arranged a meeting with a local JAM official.

14. (S) The interlocutors met in a tent and spoke for about 90 minutes. The representative of the JAM appeared to be in his early 40's, about five feet and ten inches tall. He had a full, but short beard, and was dressed in the black "uniform" associated with the JAM. Our sense was that he belonged to the Gizzie tribe, was probably either from Nasiriyah or lived there now, and that he was local. In addition, he had the bearing of an officer, but probably not senior. He nevertheless spoke with knowledge of JAM activities and personnel both in Dhi Qar and in the rest of Iraq. The JAM interlocutor indicated that he was a liaison between the JAM and other organizations, and that he reported to the

commander in Nasiriyah. He seemed genuinely nervous about meeting with CF personnel.

15. (S) The U.S. interlocutors presented their case that the CFs wanted to do reconstruction projects to benefit the Iraqi people regardless of the political outcome. We need to be able to do these projects without fear of reprisals or attacks by the militia's in all areas of Dhi Qar. These projects will restore essential services in areas where they are desperately needed, and will benefit the local population as well by providing critically needed employment. As it stands now, the CFs are hampered in Dhi Qar from effecting these projects due to lack of security.

16. (S) The JAM representative said that the official position of the Office of Muqtadr Al-Sadr (OMS) and the JAM is to not attack CFs, Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), or Iraqi Police (IP) unless first attacked. He stated, however, that the JAM only controls about 80 percent of the militia members who are aligned with the OMS. The other 20 percent represent a radical fringe element, which, while loosely aligned with the JAM, are nevertheless not under the JAM's immediate control. There are elements within the JAM in Dhi Qar who would be willing to cooperate with CFs on reconstruction projects, but who refuse to do so out of fear of reprisals from those extreme elements. According to the JAM representative, one of the problems the more moderate elements face is that the commander of the JAM in Nasiriyah is weak and cannot crack down on these radical elements.

17. (S) The JAM representative went on to say that the greater danger to the CFs came from the Badr Corps in the province. According to the JAM representative, the Badr Corps, the militia associated with the Supreme Council for

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the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), is extremely resentful of CF presence in Dhi Qar. He said that the Badr Corps will attack CFs at any opportunity. (Comment: In Dhi Qar, many of the police officials are affiliated with Badr Corps, while many of the rank and file officers are JAM. This situation reflects a cultural divide between the two organizations, with the Badrists being the more educated and older, while JAM draws its ranks from the younger, less-educated, and sometimes chronically unemployed members of the province. We do not agree with the OMS representative's assessment of the Badr Corps: to date, the Badr Corps has not caused problems to CFs, and Nassariyah police with know Badr Corps ties have cooperated with the coalition on many occasions.)

18. (S) The JAM representative also discussed the difference between JAM and the militia known as the Al Sharkie Group. Al Sharkie is a religious leader who studied under Moqtada Al Sadr's father. When Moqtada Al Sadr's father was killed, both Al Sadr and Al Sharkie felt that they should be Al Sadr's spiritual heirs. Al Sharkie went on to found the Al Sharkie Group, which is not under the control of the JAM although it draws its ranks from the same demographics as the JAM. The Al Sharkie group is know for being more militant than JAM and has no desire to cooperate with coalition forces.

19. (S) In addition, the JAM representative gave us an indication of how closely related all the competing powers, the JAM, the Badrists and the Sheiks are in Dhi Qar province. When Civil Affairs officer asked him why Dhi Qar was so quiet relative to the rest of Iraq, he responded by saying "we all grew up with each other, and we work these things out eventually."

110. (S) Comment: This meeting gave us an insight into the different points of view within the JAM regarding their openness to cooperate with CFs. There are many who are willing to do so because they see that our efforts will benefit Dhi Qar regardless of whether they agree with us on political issues, but they cannot now push for it for fear of

being targeted by fringe elements of the JAM. The JAM representative's life itself will be forfeit should it become known that he is even speaking with CFs. We hope that this meeting will begin a deeper dialogue with more moderate JAM elements. End comment.  
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